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## THE PURPOSE AND PLAN OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

### II.

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### III. THE PURPOSE OF THE WRITER.

IN the absence of any statement by the author of the purpose with which he wrote, it is necessary to appeal solely to the evidence afforded by the content and arrangement of the book, and by the emphasis which it lays upon certain ideas or elements of the narrative.

At the outset, in the phrase which in effect contains the title of the book, Jesus is characterized as the Christ, the Son of God,<sup>11</sup> and in the first event in which Jesus himself appears he heard the voice from heaven saying to him: "Thou art my beloved son; in thee I am well pleased." This naturally raises the question whether the first line of the gospel does not express the proposition which it is the purpose of the author in the rest of the book to prove. But does the book, as a whole, justify an affirmative answer to this question? Certainly the book is not in form an argument framed to support this proposition. Nor is it true that in the narrative Jesus is represented as affirming this proposition at the outset, and then devoting his ministry to the advancing of evidence to sustain it. But neither of these facts quite answers the question of the author's purpose. It is necessary to distinguish between the purpose which the writer aimed to accomplish and the form in which he presented his material,

<sup>11</sup> The words "Son of God" (*υιου θεου*) are lacking in a very few ancient authorities. WH. place them in the margin, expressing the opinion that neither reading can be safely rejected. The strong evidence in their favor, and the early recognition of Jesus as Son of God in the narrative, seem to justify the treatment of this characterization as reflecting the author's conception of Jesus. SWETE (*The Gospel according to St. Mark*, pp. lx, 1) expresses the opinion that the whole of this verse is probably due to a later hand. But this is a conjecture for which there is no external evidence.

as well as between the proposition which the writer puts in the forefront of his book and that which Jesus put in the forefront of his ministry. What proposition the writer aimed to prove, or what impression he aimed to make, or what result he desired to accomplish, can be answered only by a careful study of the contents and structure of the book, and to this we must turn.

After a brief account of the ministry of John the Baptist, and an equally condensed narrative of the baptism and temptation of Jesus, the narrative passes at once into his Galilean ministry. This ministry begins with the announcement of the approach of the kingdom and a command to the people to repent. Jesus teaches the people, heals the sick, casts out demons, forgives sin, gathers to him disciples, makes for himself enemies. Yet, so far as the record shows, he gave no name to his office, and claimed for himself no title but "Son of Man,"<sup>12</sup> accepted none but "Sir" or "Master."

The effect of this evangelistic and healing work of Jesus was twofold. On the one hand, multitudes followed him, chiefly to be healed, a few disciples attached themselves to him, and from these he selected, after a time, the Twelve whom he instructed and sent out to do the same kind of work that he himself was doing. From these Twelve he called forth at length on the journey to Cæsarea Philippi what was apparently their first explicit and intelligent acknowledgment of his Messiahship.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Into the much-disputed question what the term "Son of Man" meant, as used by Jesus of himself, there is not space to enter here. It is perhaps sufficient to observe that in view of the reticence concerning his Messiahship which, according to this gospel, Jesus observed almost to the end of his ministry, it is impossible to suppose that the evangelist regarded the term "Son of Man," by which Jesus publicly and almost from the beginning of his ministry designated himself, as a recognized equivalent of "Messiah." The demoniacs are the first, and for a time the only, persons who address him by any such title as "Son of God," or "Christ," and their testimony Jesus forbids them to bear.

<sup>13</sup> This does not imply that the disciples had not from the first suspected, or even believed, that Jesus was the Christ; still less that Jesus had not from the first known himself to be the Messiah. The representation of this gospel is rather that Jesus did not thrust his Messianic claim into the foreground; did not make recognition of it a test and condition of discipleship; did not, so to speak, conduct his campaign on the basis of it; but, on the contrary, kept it in the background, both with his disciples and with the people at large, until each had the opportunity to gain from Jesus' own

Then, forbidding his disciples to speak to others of him as the Messiah, he went on to instruct them further concerning his mission, telling them, what was entirely out of character with their conception of the Messiah, that he must suffer and die, rejected by his nation, and that they, as his disciples, must be ready, with like devotion to the interests of their fellow-men, to suffer a like fate. From this time on he continued his instruction of the disciples, partly in specific preparation of them for his death, partly in the way of more general instruction concerning the things of the kingdom.

On the other hand, Jesus met with opposition. His own family thought him beside himself; his fellow-townsmen had little faith in him; the scribes and Pharisees opposed him, at first not pronouncedly, but with increasing bitterness. This contrariety of result was in accordance with Jesus' own teaching that the sowing of the seed of the kingdom would be followed, not by uniform harvests of good, but by diverse results and division of households. His assumption of authority in the temple, following close upon his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, in which he had for the first time encouraged and planned the public declaration of him as the Messiah, fanned into flame the opposition of his enemies. The Pharisees, who were his earliest opponents, joined now by the Sadducees and chief priests, determined upon his death. His trial gave occasion to a distinct avowal on his part that he was the Christ, the Son of God, and it was for this that he was condemned to death by the Jewish authorities.

His death, in which the opposition to him culminates, was speedily followed by his resurrection,<sup>14</sup> verifying his prediction and vindicating his claims.

conduct and character a conception of Messiahship somewhat akin to his own. He did not define himself by the term "Messiah," but he defined "Messiah" by himself. Thus this term represented for the disciples, as they grew in knowledge of their Master, an ever-changing and enlarging conception.

<sup>14</sup>Mark's story of the resurrection is incomplete in the gospel as we have it. Chap. 16:8 is the end of that which we have reason to believe came from the hand of Mark. Yet it cannot be that this is all that he wrote. He certainly did not intend to close his gospel with the words, "They were afraid," and with no account at all of an appearance of Jesus after his resurrection. But the remainder of what he wrote, or intended to write, has in some way failed of transmission to us. Instead of it we

Thus the book gives a picture of the public career of Jesus which, taken as a whole, has a clearly defined character and great verisimilitude. Possessing, from the moment of his baptism, the first event in which he appears in the gospel, a clear definition of his own mission, he moves steadily on in the work of proclaiming the kingdom and revealing himself to men who, in the nature of the case, could receive that revelation only little by little. Not by argument, not chiefly by assertion, but by his life he reveals himself and his conception of the kingdom and the Messiah. Winning, by this revelation, both followers and foes, he teaches his disciples, as they are able to receive it, what his work and fate are to be, and what theirs, too, must be, and moves on with clear foresight both of death and of triumph over death to the culmination of his self-revelation in crucifixion and resurrection.

It is thus with Jesus in his public career that this book has to do. There is no story of the infancy. There is no genealogical table linking Jesus with the past and proving his Abrahamic and Davidic descent. The background of the life is Palestinian and Jewish, as it must have been to be true to the facts, but there is no emphasis upon the relations of Jesus to Judaism or the Old Testament. Quotations of Jesus from the Old Testament are reported, but the evangelist's own use of it is limited to his first sentence. The distinctly Jewish point of view, so clearly manifest in Matthew, for example, is wholly lacking. It is not Jesus in relation to the past, or the prophecies of the Messiah, but Jesus as he appeared to his contemporaries, a figure in, and a factor of, the history of his own times, that this gospel presents to us. The narrative is confined wholly to the most active period of Jesus' life, chiefly to the busy Galilean ministry and the still more crowded Passion week. It

have in vss. 9-20 a narrative of the appearance of Jesus after his resurrection, from another hand, and based, perhaps, on the accounts of the other gospels. For fuller discussion of the genuineness and authorship of this passage see WH., *Greek Testament*, II, Appendix, pp. 28-51; BURGON, *The Last Twelve Verses of St. Mark*; GOULD, *Commentary on Mark*, pp. 301-4; CONYBEARE, in *Expositor*, IV, viii, p. 241; IV, x, p. 219; V, ii, p. 401; ZAHN, *Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons*, II, pp. 910 ff.; ROHRBACH, *Der Schluss des Markusevangeliums*.

is rapid, condensed, abrupt. It reminds one of the words of Peter: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you" (Acts 2:22), and "Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed him with Holy Spirit and power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

Such a presentation of Jesus has all the value of an argument, with little of its form, and possibly with no conscious argumentative aim. The structure of the book seems almost wholly unaffected by a purpose of the writer to convince his readers of any defined proposition. Not only is there lacking, as also in Matthew, the strictly argumentative structure, but there is little indication even of the arrangement of material in a certain order to facilitate the production of a certain impression. Even in respect to the plan and method of Jesus, of which the book gives so distinct an impression, it does not appear that the book was written to prove that such was Jesus' method, but rather that it was written as it was because such was, in fact, the career of Jesus. This element is in the book, we are constrained to believe, because it was in the life. The writer tells the story of the life of Jesus as he knows it, naturally emphasizing the things which have impressed him. Because it has impressed him it will impress other men of like minds, and because of this fact it possesses argumentative value. But the argument is latent rather than explicit. There are men today to whom closely wrought argument, presenting a proposition and sustaining it by a series of reasons, means little, but to whom deeds of power—still more, a career of power—mean much. Such men are impressionable rather than reflective, emotional rather than logical. Such a man the New Testament leads us to believe Peter was, and there is not lacking a suggestion that John Mark was a man of the same character. Such a man, at any rate, we judge the writer of this gospel to have been, and to such men especially would it appeal. It is adapted to lead them to share the author's conviction, announced in his first line, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God; or, if they already hold it, to hold it

more firmly and intelligently. The book makes its appeal to the reader as it records that Jesus made his appeal to his contemporaries, not by argument adduced to prove his Messiahship, but by the simple presentation of the life itself, leaving this life to make its own impression. As Jesus, believing from the beginning in his own Messiahship and divine sonship, convinced his followers of it, not by affirmation or by argument, but by living, so the evangelist, holding at the outset to the Messiahship of Jesus, depends, not on formulated argument, but on the story of the life, to carry this conviction to his readers. The book differs in this respect from the life only in the incidental announcement of its thesis in its first line.

Is such a book intended to convince unbelievers or to instruct those who already believe? Certainly it could be used for either purpose. But the absence of anything like a controversial tone, the simple straightforwardness of the story, without comment, or even arrangement for argumentative purposes, leads us to think of it as a book written for Christians rather than for unbelievers, and chiefly for instruction rather than for conviction. That it was intended, as we believe Matthew was, to play a part in the controversies of the apostolic age, of which we learn from Acts and the epistles, there is no evidence. The writer is certainly not a Judaistic Christian, but neither does he show any distinctly anti-Judaistic interest. He writes in an atmosphere, or from a point of view, unaffected by these controversies. Its aim is undoubtedly edification, but it seeks this, not so much by convincing its readers of something they did not believe, or even by setting itself to confirm a conviction already held, as by informing them of facts which are useful to them to know. The book has argumentative value for believers and unbelievers, but it must be doubted whether its author thought of it as argumentative in any sense.

#### IV. THE PLAN OF THE BOOK.

The following analysis is an attempt to show the contents and structure of the book as it lay in the mind of the writer, though the simplicity of the plan of the book renders such an

analysis in part scarcely more than an enumeration of sections. Though we cannot affirm that Mark has in all cases given events in their chronological order, there is little or nothing to show that he ever intentionally varied from that order.<sup>15</sup> And the relations of events to one another—the causal dependence of later events upon earlier ones—constrains us to believe that not only is the succession of the several periods of the record that also of the life, but that within these periods the order is, in the main, that of the events themselves.

## ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL.

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| I. INTRODUCTION: PREPARATION FOR THE PUBLIC WORK OF JESUS.                    | 1 : 1-13      |
| 1. Preaching of John the Baptist.   | 1 : 1-8       |
| 2. Baptism of Jesus.  | 1 : 9-11      |
| 3. Temptation in the wilderness.  | 1 : 12, 13    |
| II. THE GALILEAN MINISTRY.  | 1 : 14-9 : 50 |
| 1. The work begun and favorably received.                                     | 1 : 14-45     |
| <i>a.</i> Jesus begins preaching in Galilee.                                  | 1 : 14, 15    |
| <i>b.</i> Call of the four fishermen.   | 1 : 16-20     |
| <i>c.</i> A sabbath in Capernaum.   | 1 : 21-34     |
| <i>d.</i> A preaching tour in Galilee.  | 1 : 35-45     |
| 2. The opposition of the scribes and Pharisees excited and rapidly developed. | 2 : 1-3 : 6   |
| <i>a.</i> A paralytic healed and his sins forgiven.                           | 2 : 1-12      |
| <i>b.</i> Call of Levi, and the feast in his house.                           | 2 : 13-17     |
| <i>c.</i> Jesus' answer to a question concerning fasting.                     | 2 : 18-22     |
| <i>d.</i> Plucking grain on the sabbath.                                      | 2 : 23-28     |
| <i>e.</i> A withered hand healed on the sabbath.                              | 3 : 1-6       |

<sup>15</sup> At one point only in the gospel is there any considerable indication of arrangement upon a topical plan involving a departure from chronological order, viz., in 2 : 1-3 : 6. This group of five short narratives certainly does exhibit the growth of the hostility of the scribes and Pharisees to Jesus, and this seems to be clearly the link of connection joining them. That they should have occurred thus in rapid succession seems somewhat improbable, and the plot to put him to death (3 : 6) strikes one as strange so early in the ministry. It is altogether possible that the grouping here was that of one of Peter's discourses, and that 3 : 1-6, or at least vs. 6, is anachronistically narrated. Even this, however, must remain only a conjecture, and the general order of events in Mark remains, if not chronological, yet apparently the nearest approximation to such an arrangement that we possess. Cf. SWETE, *St. Mark*, pp. liii ff.; BRUCE, in the *Expositor's Greek Testament*, Vol. I, pp. 27-32.



3. The beginnings of the separation between the followers of Christ and the rest of the community; the organization of the band of twelve personal attendants and helpers. 3 : 7-35
  - a.* The widespread fame of Jesus. 3 : 7-12
  - b.* The choosing of the Twelve. 3 : 13-19
  - c.* Concerning eternal sin. 3 : 20-30
  - d.* Natural and spiritual kinsmen. 3 : 31-35
4. The parables of the kingdom's growth, in which is also illustrated its separating power. 4 : 1-34
5. Sundry manifestations of his power, which meet with varied reception, some believing, some unbelieving, some slow to believe. 4 : 35-6 : 6
  - a.* Stilling of the tempest. 4 : 35-41
  - b.* The Gerasene demoniac. 5 : 1-20
  - c.* Jairus' daughter raised to life. 5 : 21-43
  - d.* The rejection at Nazareth. 6 : 1-6
6. The sending out of the Twelve to engage in work like his own. 6 : 7-29
7. The continuance of his work in Galilee, with the reappearance of the same features : he heals and feeds the multitudes; his disciples are slow of understanding; the multitudes follow him; the Pharisees oppose him. 6 : 30-7 : 23
  - a.* The feeding of the five thousand. 6 : 30-46
  - b.* Jesus walking on the sea. 6 : 47-52
  - c.* Many healed in Galilee. 6 : 53-56
  - d.* On eating with unwashed hands. 7 : 1-23
8. A withdrawal from Galilee into Gentile territory, and the ready faith which Jesus finds there. 7 : 24-37
  - a.* The Syrophœnician woman's daughter. 7 : 24-30
  - b.* The deaf and dumb man healed. 7 : 31-37
9. Further experiences in Galilee in which the same features as before appear. 8 : 1-26
  - a.* The feeding of the four thousand. 8 : 1-10
  - b.* Pharisees demanding a sign from heaven. 8 : 11-21
  - c.* A blind man healed near Bethsaida. 8 : 22-26
10. A second withdrawal from Galilee : tour to Cæsarea Philippi and return to the sea. He draws out from Peter the confession of him as the Christ, and begins to teach his disciples concerning his own sufferings, and the conditions of discipleship to him. 8 : 27-9 : 50
  - a.* Peter's confession of Jesus' Messiahship. 8 : 27-30

<i>b.</i> Jesus' prediction of his own death and resurrection.	8 : 31—9 : 1
<i>c.</i> The transfiguration.	9 : 2—13
<i>d.</i> The demoniac boy healed.	9 : 14—29
<i>e.</i> Jesus again foretells his death and resurrection.	9 : 30—32
<i>f.</i> The ambition and jealousy of the disciples reproved.	9 : 33—50
III. THE JOURNEY FROM GALILEE TO JUDEA, and instructions on the way ; on nearing Jerusalem he is publicly saluted as Son of David.	
	chap. 10
1. Departure from Galilee into Perea.	10 : 1
2. Concerning divorce.	10 : 2—12
3. Blessing little children.	10 : 13—16
4. The rich young ruler.	10 : 17—31
5. Announcement of his crucifixion.	10 : 32—34
6. Ambition of James and John reproved.	10 : 35—45
7. The blind man near Jericho healed.	10 : 46—52
IV. THE MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM : Jesus causes himself to be announced as Messiah ; comes into conflict with the leaders of the people ; predicts the downfall of the Jewish temple and capital.	
	chaps. 11—13
1. The triumphal entry ; he is saluted as Messiah.	11 : 1—11
2. The cursing of the fig tree.	11 : 12—14
3. The cleansing of the temple.	11 : 15—19
4. Comment on the withered fig tree.	11 : 20—25
5. Conflict with the Jewish leaders.	11 : 27—12 : 40
<i>a.</i> Christ's authority challenged.	11 : 27—33
<i>b.</i> The parable of the vineyard.	12 : 1—12
<i>c.</i> Three questions by the Jewish rulers.	12 : 13—34
<i>d.</i> Jesus' question concerning David's son.	12 : 35—37
<i>e.</i> Warning against the scribes.	12 : 38—40
6. The widow's two mites.	12 : 41—44
7. The prophetic discourse concerning the downfall of the temple and city.	chap. 13
V. THE PASSION HISTORY.	
	chaps. 14, 15
1. The plot of the Jews.	14 : 1, 2
2. The anointing in the house of Simon the leper.	14 : 3—9
3. The bargain with Judas.	14 : 10, 11
4. The last Passover of Jesus and his disciples.	14 : 12—26
5. Prediction of Peter's denial.	14 : 27—31
6. The agony in Gethsemane.	14 : 32—42
7. The betrayal and arrest.	14 : 43—52
8. The trial before the Jewish authorities.	14 : 53—65
9. The denials of Peter.	14 : 66—72

10. The trial before Pilate.	15 : 1-20
11. The crucifixion and the death of Jesus.	15 : 21-41
12. The burial.	15 : 42-47
VI. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS, attested by the empty tomb and the word of the young man.	
	16 : 1-8
Appendix : Summary of the appearances of Jesus.	
	16 : 9-20



THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.—BOUGUEREAU